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## SOME ASPECTS OF THE TEACHING OF ST. ATHANASIUS AND ST. AUGUSTINE ABOUT THE BLESSED TRINITY

**T**HIS article is intended as a supplement to and a development of certain suggestions contained in my first article on "St. Augustine and the Eastern Tradition." That article was in great part concerned with St. Augustine's theology of the Blessed Trinity and its relations to the Nicene Faith and the philosophy of Plotinus. This subject is of such great importance in itself, and so relevant to certain contemporary movements of theological thought, that it seemed desirable to examine comparatively in rather greater detail the teaching on this supreme subject of St. Athanasius, one of the greatest of Eastern doctors and chief exponent of the Nicene Faith, and of St. Augustine, Father of Western theology. The article should be comprehensible without reference to its predecessor, and like it is only intended as a preliminary sketch. The subject is one which concerns us all intimately, because it lies at the very heart of our life of prayer and study as Christians. I have therefore dared to embark on it, with the utmost humility and consciousness of my own shortcomings, though it may seem to be a triple presumption for a man, a sinner, and one in no way commissioned to teach by the Church, to write about the Most Blessed Trinity.

The doctrine of the Blessed Trinity as proclaimed by St. Athanasius has been recognised and accepted from his own time onwards as the common faith of the Church; and a study of his teaching as a whole would have far too wide a range for our present purpose. I propose to concentrate on his doctrine of the co-equality and co-inherence of the Divine Persons and on the implications of his use of the image of the Sun and its Light, of which he is very fond.

St. Athanasius is perhaps of all the early Greek Fathers the one whose mind is most exclusively formed and occupied by the study of scripture and the tradition of the Church, and who shows least trace in his theology of the influence of Hellenic philosophy. From what we know of his education it appears that he made some progress in Platonic studies, and he is very well aware of some of the essential points at issue between Christianity and Paganism, but his mind does not seem to have been deeply penetrated by Platonism and his way of thinking is a scriptural and traditional rather than a Platonic one. The centre and root of his Trinitarian teaching is a passionate realization of the most ancient dogma of Revelation, the unity and uniqueness of God and His absolute difference from creatures, with all that this implies. Here lies the great point of difference between pagan Platonism and, not only Christianity, but the other religions which derive from the Old Testament Revelation, Judaism and Islam. The Greek religious tradition which attained its most perfect expression in the philosophy of Plotinus may be very roughly summed up as follows. There is one universe of being, eternal, an organic, unbroken whole, divine as a whole and in at least its nobler parts. All derives from one supreme principle, divine or transcending even divinity, but divinity ( $\tau\acute{o}$   $\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omicron\nu$ ) is rightly predicated of the beings of every level in the gradually descending hierarchy at least down to and including the World-Soul and human intelligences. Divinity for the Greeks was not an exclusive term, and in their theology, philosophical or popular, there was always a hierarchy of beings divine in varying degrees by right of nature, not by grace or supernatural participation. Divine beings were simply the highest class of beings within the universal order.

For the Christian, on the other hand, as for the Jew before him and also for the Moslem, there is One and One Only God, Divine absolutely and only Divine by right of nature, and all other beings are His creatures, freely created by Him out of nothing. The difference between Him and creatures is absolute, one of kind not of degree. He is beyond and transcends the universal order which He has created freely (and is therefore most intimately present to every part of it, since He is no more at its highest than at its lowest point and is in immediate contact with every one of His creatures without the need of a hierarchy of intermediaries).

These two theologies, that of the pagan Greeks and that of the scriptures, are coherent systems of thought both worthy of intellectual respect. But they are entirely different at their very heart, in their ideas of Divinity, and one cannot be



of service to the other unless it is entirely dissolved and its elements reborn into a new world of thought, which is what eventually happened to Greek philosophical theology. Plotinus and St. Augustine, Aristotle and St. Thomas, may sound very much alike until you realise that they mean something entirely different by the word "God" (which Plotinus, incidentally, very seldom uses). But in the course of the rich, complex and confused development of pagan and Christian theology which occupied the first three centuries A.D., a certain amount of blurring at the edges took place. Christian theologians were to be found in fair numbers who admitted into their thought the idea of "degrees of divinity" and made the Son in effect less divine than the Father, on a rather lower plane of being though still within the Godhead; it is however impressive to note how essentially orthodox in intention even the most "subordinationist" of these theologians were, and how they cling to the essential doctrines of the unity of the Godhead and the absolute difference between God and creatures. Origen, for all his remarkable (and entirely unintentional) divagations from orthodoxy makes this perfectly clear, and his magnificent system of philosophical theology, for all its defects and excesses, is throughout Christian, not pagan. But Subordinationism did introduce a certain cloud of confusion into the Christian conception of Divinity, and it was the fierce faith of St. Athanasius which finally dissipated it. So of course in another way did the extreme form of Arian Unitarianism. It was certainly not Christian, but it was more in accordance with the Biblical revelation of God than some attempts at compromise with orthodoxy. It is less pagan to say "The Son is not God at all. He is a creature," than to say "The Son is God in some sort of way, but not the same way as the Father." There is an almost Islamic quality at times about St. Athanasius's methods and manner; some of his sermons might appropriately have been delivered with a drawn sword in his hand as he stood in the pulpit; and this makes him rather repellent to some gentler or more easy-going souls. But it was perhaps that very quality which made it easy for him to go straight to the root of the matter, and to ensure that the Moslem theologians' later reproach of "polytheism" against the Christians should be for ever invalid as far as the orthodox faith of the Catholic Church is concerned.

The Christian must proclaim as passionately as the Moslem that there is One God, One Only God, God absolutely, without parts or degrees in His Divinity. But he must also passionately believe and proclaim that the Son is God and the Holy

Spirit is God. Otherwise, as St. Athanasius saw and insisted, we are not and cannot be truly redeemed. For our redemption is a real, though utterly mysterious and supernatural, deification by Grace, wrought only through the Son and in the Holy Spirit. If we are partakers in the Divinity of Christ, then Christ must be utterly and fully Divine, "equal to the Father as touching His Godhead." And if God is absolutely One then the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity must be One Substance, and the fullness of the Divinity must be eternally all in each Person. Human elaborations of the dogma tend to fail and fall short because they almost inevitably suggest parts and division instead of the perfect coinherence of the Three Persons, each not a part but the whole, the full substance of the Infinite Godhead, in the eternal Act, the Love which is the Divine Life which by a mysterious generosity we are called upon to share; and so we get a Sabellianizing reaction which sees in the distinction of Persons only a distinction of "aspects," or some strange attempt to penetrate beyond the Trinity to a higher Unity.

It is then because St. Athanasius so strongly insists on the two great dogmas of primitive and apostolic Christianity, "There is One and One Only God. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, is God," that he arrives at his profound and decisive formulation of the doctrine of the Co-Equality and Co-Inherence of the Divine Persons, of that *περιχώρησις* by which Each is All. It is from this standpoint that St. Athanasius attacks those Arians who would say that the Son was God while denying that He was Co-Equal or of One Substance with the Father as being Ditheists, or sharing pagan Hellenic conceptions of divinity. St. Athanasius's charge is in fact justified. These Arians were, in effect, though probably not consciously, using *θεός* in the old Greek, not the new (in the world of Greek culture) Judaeo-Christian sense.

From what has been said so far it looks as if the Athanasian doctrine had cut all possible connections between Christian theology and the Hellenic philosophy of God, and as if the triumph of the Nicene Faith was likely to mean that the philosophers of Christendom in the future would be condemned to the same inescapable unorthodoxy as the philosophers of Islam if they tried to graft their philosophy on to the great Hellenic tradition. Actually, as we know, nothing of the sort happened, and it in fact became possible to construct on the Nicene foundation a more fruitful synthesis of Greek and Christian thought than had ever been possible before. We can see one of the reasons why this happened if we examine



a particular sort of language which St. Athanasius is very fond of using. His favourite metaphor for the Procession of the Son from the Father is to speak of Him as the Father's Brightness or Outshining Light. This is of course an expression derived from the New Testament. St. Athanasius's repeated use of the word ἀπαύγασμα shows that he has especially in mind that passage of the Epistle to the Hebrews (i, 3), which he quotes at least once, where the Son is called ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης, the outshining of the Father's glory ("Being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His Person" is the Authorised Version's translation of the passage, if I remember it correctly). But it is also "emanationist" language, of the type used by every religious thinker (and some, like the Gnostics and Hermetists, who can hardly be said to deserve so respectable a title) from Philo Judaeus to the Neo-Platonists. They all describe the way in which one spiritual being in their hierarchies proceeds from another in terms of radiation or emanation, and the metaphor of the ray of light is a very favourite one. There is however one most vitally important difference between the orthodox Christian use of this metaphor as found in St. Athanasius and its use by the non-Christian writers. In all the pagan systems, and very clearly in that great hierarchy of the Three Hypostases in Plotinus which is the highest achievement of pagan theology, the outshining or emanated principle is *inferior* to the emanant or source of light; so the Divine Intellect is less than the One from which it emanates, and Soul is less again. The principle of emanation is bound up with the idea of degrees of divinity of which I have already spoken. For this reason it is rather startling for a modern student of Plotinus, fully conscious of the essentially un-Christian character of his doctrine of emanation, to awake to the fact that he is using emanationist language every time he recites the Creed of the Mass and says "Lumen de Lumine"; and furthermore to realise that it is used by almost all the great theologians and Doctors of the Church, Western and Eastern; and most puzzling of all to anyone trained in modern methods of research into ancient philosophical ideas, to find that practically all the older authors, from St. Augustine to Norris of Bemerton or later, identify the "Platonic Trinity" (that is, the Three Hypostases of Plotinus) with the Christian Trinity. St. Athanasius supplies the key to the understanding of this curious situation. For in his use of the metaphor of the Sun and the Outshining Light he is most careful to insist that the Light, the Son, is *equal* to the Source, the Father. Both Outshining and Sun are equally One Light, the Divine Sub-

stance. All the Light of the Sun is communicated to His Outshining without sharing, partition or diminution. This of course is at least an equally legitimate use of the metaphor to that made by Plotinus. In fact the characteristic Plotinian doctrine of diminishing emanation, which derives ultimately, in all probability, from a materialistic philosophy (the type of later Stoicism associated with the name of Posidonius) is not at all easy to defend philosophically when applied to immaterial being outside space and time.

This appearance in the theology of St. Athanasius of an expression of the Catholic doctrine of the Blessed Trinity by an emanation-metaphor which is essentially scriptural, and which strongly asserts the equality of emanated Principle and emanating Source, as well as their co-eternity, is of the utmost importance for the subsequent history of Christian Platonism, for this reason. Anyone reading Plotinus with his mind already formed according to this Christian doctrine of emanation would in the first place be certain radically to misunderstand Plotinus's own thought, unless he was studying his author in the scientifically detached spirit of a modern historian of philosophy, which can hardly be expected in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. That does not matter. The misunderstanding of their predecessors by creative thinkers has been one of the most fruitful causes of advance in the development of philosophy, and especially in the Platonic tradition. What is important is that this fruitful misunderstanding put at the disposal of St. Augustine, and of all later Christian theologians who attempt to express in human language something of the revealed mystery of the Blessed Trinity, the riches of Plotinus's thought about the relations of the Three Hypostases and the life of the spiritual world. St. Augustine, as I remarked in my last article, manages with surprising ease and unconsciousness of any difficulty to identify the Second Hypostasis of Plotinus, the Divine Intellect, with the Divine Word Who is the substance of Christian Revelation, and also to ignore the radical Plotinian distinction between the "One" (First Hypostasis) and the "One-Being" (Second Hypostasis). This distinction, if any attempt is made to adopt it, into Christianity must either lead to extreme Subordinationism or to making the Divine Unity transcend the Godhead Itself. In either case it is incompatible with the Christian doctrine of God. But by making the identification of Divine Intellect and Divine Word and ignoring the distinction of kind and level between One and One-Being, St. Augustine is enabled to treat Plotinus's doctrine of the interrelations of spiritual being as a foreshadowing of the



Christian doctrine of Trinity-in-Unity, and it is a doctrine of amazing profundity and value. I suggested in my last article that it was Plotinus's doctrine of the inner life of the Hypostases which St. Augustine found so particularly valuable for his Trinitarian theology. This is true as far as it goes, especially as regards Plotinus's teaching about the Divine Intelligence, which is also the living and intelligent world of Ideal Being, the living organic unity of eternal Thought and eternal Reality. But it needs a good deal of supplementing and correcting, for the system of Plotinus is not like that of Proclus, a system of "water-tight compartments," with each level cut off clearly from those above and below, and it is not really possible to consider the inner life of a Plotinian hypostasis in isolation from its connections with the hypostases above and below. This is especially true of the Divine Intelligence, whose whole inner life is determined by its procession or emanation from the One and its return upon It in contemplation. It is for this reason that St. Augustine's ignoring of the true nature of the hierarchy of Plotinus and consequent transformation of Plotinian into Christian theology is so vitally important. Marius Victorinus had attempted to do the same thing before him, but, Nicene and orthodox as he is in intention, perhaps he stood too close to Plotinus (whose works he translated into Latin) to be successful. His theology is distinctly Subordinationist at times and Plotinus's thought does not undergo in him that process of complete dissolution and rebirth into Christianity which it passes through in the mind of St. Augustine.

The parallelism between the thought of St. Augustine and that of St. Athanasius about the Trinity in Unity is very striking. In both we find the same passionate affirmation of the Absolute Unity of God, though in St. Augustine the Plotinian striving after unity comes to reinforce for him and help him to understand the tremendous proclamation of the Judaeo-Christian Revelation which stood massively alone, without need of support from philosophy, in the mind of St. Athanasius. Both transform contemporary thought about the processions of eternal spiritual beings in exactly the same way. As St. Athanasius shows the Outshining Word Co-Equal and Consubstantial with the Source of Light, the Father, so St. Augustine transforms the subordinate ordering of the outshining Divine Intelligence to its Source, the One, into the Co-Equality and Consubstantiality of Father and Divine Word or Intelligence in the One Godhead. There is no need to look for much direct influence of St. Athanasius on St. Augustine, and St. Augustine is so little in direct touch

with the Greek-speaking half of the Roman world that we should not be very likely to find evidence of more than superficial contact. The link between them is the Nicene formulation of the Catholic Faith, and what they have in common is a peculiarly sharp and clear insight into its essential meaning. An interesting difference between them is that St. Athanasius, as we have seen, is very clearly conscious of the pagan implications of the view opposed to his own. St. Augustine, on the other hand, though he is very clear about the opposition between pagan Platonism and Christianity on some points, notably the Incarnation and all it implies about Divine and human humility, does not seem to see any opposition in their doctrines of the Divine Intelligence. (It must be emphasised again that for Plotinus the Divine Intelligence is other than and far inferior to the Transcendent Unity). The explanation of the difference is probably that St. Athanasius sees paganism in a heresy with which he was engaged in a fight to the death—and to demonstrate its existence there was of course an excellent controversial point; whereas for St. Augustine Plotinus was a guide on his way to the Christian Faith.

Of that "psychological" approach to the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity which is the most original and greatest of the contributions which St. Augustine, and through him Plotinus, made to Catholic theology, I do not propose to say much more than I have already said in my former article. It is, however, worth pointing out that the essence of the doctrine does not lie in the analogies drawn between the Blessed Trinity and the human soul, which are not always very convincing or of permanent value. It is rather to be found in the continual emphasis on the One Divine Life of the Three Persons. Unity and Life are inseparable in St. Augustine's thought; the Living is more one than the non-living. The perfection of Unity, of Life, of Love which is both Unity and Life, is the infinite perfection of the Triune Life of God. This Living Love is One Whole without parts; all is each and each is all. Hence St. Augustine stresses the oneness of action of the Blessed Trinity in the world of created being. This vision of the One Triune Life, which St. Augustine gives us, is one of tremendous and continuing power and has become the very centre of the great tradition of Western theology and spiritual life. There is another way of considering the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity in which much stress is laid on the difference of relation and function of the Divine Persons and it is emphasised that the Father is Principle and Source of the other two. This is the way chosen by the Cappadocian Fathers and by the tradition of the East in general,



though it is by no means confined to the East. It is of course orthodox and in certain theological contexts necessary. But anyone who has been touched, however little, with the light of St. Augustine's vision will feel some discomfort when this line of theological thinking is pursued very rigorously and with much elaboration of detail. It will seem to him to verge on a dead schematization rather than the presentation of a Life, or else to investigate the secrets of the Triune Life further than any man should, even when enlightened by Revelation and strengthened by Grace, or even to come dangerously near to that making of parts and divisions in the Divinity against which St. Athanasius so passionately inveighs.

I will end this article with a quotation from the Encyclical of Pope Pius XII entitled *Mystici Corporis Christi*, in which the essence of the faith of St. Athanasius and St. Augustine is expressed with admirable conciseness and clarity and it is made clear once again to all Catholic thinkers that it is by this doctrine that they must be guided, that this is the Faith of the Church.

"Let all agree uncompromisingly on this, if they would not err from truth and from the orthodox teaching of the Church; to reject every kind of mystic union by which the faithful would in any way pass beyond the sphere of creatures and enter the Divine, even to the extent of one single attribute of the eternal Godhead being predicated of them as their own. And besides let all hold this as certain truth, that all these activities (of our supernatural life of union with Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit) are common to the most Blessed Trinity, in so far as they have God as supreme efficient cause."

PROFESSOR A. H. ARMSTRONG.

*Correction.* In the last issue of EASTERN CHURCHES QUARTERLY, p. 165, lines 15 and 16 should read: "he is of all Christian thinkers the most deeply influenced by the great Greek philosopher Plotinus, and yet possess a completely Christian intellect,"

## THE UNITY OCTAVE

*Editor's Note.*— Though the time of the Church Unity Octave is over for this year we do not hesitate to publish this article by Father St. John now. And that first, because we should be always praying for this end. And, in the second place, so that having this idea of the Octave clearly before our minds we may see that its observance is made widespread next year.

IT is a matter of the greatest importance that all those who realize the urgent need for a re-united Christendom should undertake as an apostolate to promote the spread of this realization amongst those not yet particularly interested. The great need of our time, amongst Christians both Catholic and non-Catholic, is to shake off our acquiescence in the divisions of Christendom as something natural and inevitable. To be filled with compunction at the wounds of Christ's Mystical Body and to long ardently for their healing, is an attitude which is extremely rare, even amongst the most God-loving and devoted of men and women, and yet until that attitude becomes as normal as it is now rare the re-union of Christendom can never, humanly speaking, come about.

An important step towards the extension and deepening of the realization of the evils which result from the divisions of Christendom is to get people of good will to pray for re-union. Devout and humble prayer deepens our sense of need, because it increases our sense of dependence upon God. Prayer for the re-union of Christendom, apart from the fact that it is the most powerful human factor in bringing re-union about, will cause us by God's grace to realize how urgent to-day is the need that the Gospel of Christ should be preached to the world by the authorized voice of His Church, undisturbed by the rivalries and discords of competing sects.

The Octave of Prayer for the unity of Christendom, which acts as a focusing point for all our prayer for unity, should be regarded therefore as the main instrument by which re-union can be accomplished, and its promotion as the main work of the apostolate of re-union. This Octave, which is celebrated from January 18th, the feast of Saint Peter's Chair at Rome, to January 25th, the feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, was started under Anglican auspices both here and in America, and owing to the submission to the Holy See of some amongst its most prominent promoters was brought with them into the Catholic Church. It is now observed with great solemnity in Rome, where the Holy Father himself takes part in it, and in many countries on the continent of Europe. In England its observance has spread slowly, but every year more parishes have adopted it, and its promotion



by the newly formed Missionary Union of Priests has this year greatly increased the number. Those who take part in this devotion are not required to hold any *views* about the likelihood of the accomplishment of the re-union of Christendom, nor of the way in which it will come about; they are simply asked to take part in mobilizing the prayers of the faithful in union with our Lord's own prayer *ut omnes unum sint*. Apostles of re-union should not rest till the Unity Octave is kept in every parish of the land, and they should work for the formation in each parish of guilds or societies pledged to offer Mass week by week, and to pray constantly for the intentions of the Octave.

The need is very urgent. Of course the fundamental reason why Christendom should be one is the same in all ages; that it is our Lord's will that all His followers should be united in the visible communion of His Mystical Body. There has never in the history of the Church been a period so critical as to-day, nor a time when the need was so great that the truths of the Gospel of Christ should be proclaimed to the world with a single united voice. The denial of the Church's authority at the Reformation has led inevitably to the denial of revelation, and still further to the denial that there is a God who has created and who rules the world. To-day a godless humanism is abroad which believes in man's autonomy, in the ultimate perfectibility of human nature, and denies the existence of any life beyond this life or of any values which are not rooted in the things of this life. Its supporters have a logical and consistent creed based upon a premiss that denies the existence of a personal God; and they are determined that the world of the future shall be organized according to it.

Over against this creed of pantheistic humanism, and the only alternative to it, is set the Christian creed, but the terrible tragedy is that the ordinary man in the street, who in the near future must make a definite choice between these two alternatives, has very little chance in the world to-day of recognizing the voice of the Church as the authentic voice of Christ, since for him it is so often drowned by the competing and discordant voices of numberless religious bodies all claiming to speak in His name. We Catholics are so used to recognizing the authentic voice of Christ in the teaching of the Church that we often fail to realize the complete muddle of the man in the street, who is quite unable to distinguish the voice of the Catholic Church from the voices of the sects. He may believe that Christ was a great teacher who had a message for the world, but he strongly suspects that his followers have some-

how bungled it, and that it is now impossible to find out for certain what it was. And so without any very vigorous or determined attempt to do so, he gives up as hopeless the task of understanding and practising the Christian way of life, both sin and suffering become increasingly meaningless to him, and he is ready to fall a prey to the superficial allurements of an easy humanism.

And when we look beyond once-Christian Europe towards the mission field, we see the same problem. The educated Indian or Chinese, heir to an ancient civilization of his own, is little disposed to listen to the Christian Gospel when to him it seems that its message is proclaimed by a chorus of voices, each announcing a different version, each denouncing the other, and all claiming to teach the truth. And the simple and uneducated native is quick to detect and is hopelessly puzzled by these same divergencies.

The need then is urgent. In view of the crisis with which we are faced it is imperative that the divisions of Christendom should cease in order that its message to the world may carry conviction, and one of the first and most important preoccupations of every faithful follower of Christ should be to do all in his power by prayer and work to bring that consummation about. With this end in view, then, let us clear our minds as to what we mean by re-union. Between ourselves and non-Catholics there is one fundamental difference. They look upon the Church as divided, as the Body of Christ torn asunder into many parts by the sin of man. Catholics know that the unity of the Church is God-given and cannot be broken, that Christendom may be divided but the Church never. They regard the re-union of Christendom as the work of healing disastrous divisions within the Church; we regard it as the gathering once more into the always existing and never failing unity of the Mystical Body of Christ, which has its earthly Head and divinely appointed centre of unity in the Holy See, of all those parts which from time to time in the course of history have become separated from that unity.

And this brings us face to face with the difficult question: Can Catholics give any countenance to the idea that corporate, re-union, the aggregation, that is, to the Catholic Church of an existing organization, is in any sense a possibility? Here we must make a distinction. The Eastern Orthodox Churches, separated by schism from the Holy See for nearly a thousand years, still possess an organization and hierarchy which derive in unbroken succession from the original organization and hierarchy which existed before the schism took place. There are enormous psychological obstacles, which



time has not lessened, to the healing of the breach between East and West ; but the differences are differences of outlook, temperament and approach ; differences of doctrine or Church order are not extensive. The mind of the Church has always consistently favoured re-union through their existing hierarchy, which has maintained from the beginning a valid ministry and sacraments. This is corporate re-union in the strict sense of the words.

But with regard to the divisions created by the disaster of the Reformation—in Britain the two established Churches and the various nonconformist bodies known generically as the Free Churches ; and on the Continent the Lutheran and Calvinist bodies—the case is very different. Here not only are there psychological obstacles equally great, but also fundamental differences of doctrine, and a hierarchy and organization (and in consequence, sacraments) which the Catholic Church cannot recognize as valid. It is obvious therefore that in the strict sense of the words there is no possibility of the corporate re-union of any of these bodies with the Holy See. Is there then any sense in which Catholics can work and pray for the re-union of our separated brethren through the religious bodies to which they belong ?

I think there is. And I think the possibility of it has been created by the entirely new situation in which we all find ourselves to-day. As Christians of different allegiances we are no longer enemies but friends. From the Reformation until the present generation we were enemies, fighting against each other ; literally at first (in the Wars of Religion) and later in controversial warfare. Now, in face of the determined attack of pantheistic humanism upon any spiritual interpretation of life, we are beginning to realize that in spite of our differences we are friends fighting shoulder to shoulder in a common cause. The change is one of immense significance. It is so new to us that we hardly as yet realize its implications. Friendship sets up an entirely new atmosphere, in which an intense desire for unity has begun to grow ; and the desire for unity has set men exploring into the history of the past to discover how differences between Christians arose and what were the causes of the original schisms. The discovery has been made that schism and heresy have often arisen through a reaction against a one-sided or unbalanced presentation of the truth. We are no longer at war ; and so we are ready to lay aside war-psychology, which will never own to being in any way wrong, and admit that though the Church has been created by God infallible so that it will never at any time fail to present the whole of Christ's truth, yet the ministers

of the Church may at times fail through slackness or fear or human respect to give that full presentation to the world of their time, and the children of the Church through the failure of their ministers and sometimes also through their own sin may not live the whole truth of their faith in their lives. In this way heresy and schism have arisen and been perpetuated. By humbly acknowledging our corporate faults, we are not letting the Church down, we are advancing the cause of truth and paving the way to a better understanding which will make the light of truth shine more clearly.

One of the most remarkable characteristics of the nineteenth century has been the rise of movements, due to the study of historical sources, which are causing various religious bodies now existing in separation from the Catholic Church to become more and more permeated by the truths of Catholicism. The Anglo-Catholic movement is well known; it is not so well known that in some of the nonconformist bodies and in the Presbyterian Kirk of Scotland there are similar movements not so spectacular in their showing, but all marked by a striking approximation to Catholic doctrine especially in regard to the Church as Christ's Mystical Body and the sacraments as the vehicles of His grace.

The liberal-modernist movement which affected even certain Catholic scholars and theologians and which seemed likely at one time to swamp and destroy orthodox belief in the non-Catholic religious bodies, has long reached its high-water mark and is now rapidly ebbing. It may be that Almighty God intends to bring many to a knowledge of the Faith through the religious bodies to which they already belong, and that it is our duty by sympathy and interest and understanding co-operation, to help the spread of these movements. That does not mean that we are to give up the desire of making individual converts. But we must remember that the making of an individual convert is ultimately God's business; our work is to prepare the ground for His grace. It may be, indeed it seems most likely, that God does leave some non-Catholics where they are, in order that they may work for Him in the surroundings in which He has placed them, and because of this He never gives them the gift of faith in the visible Church of Christ. Whether that is so or not, we are on safe ground in explaining to non-Catholics that if God gives them the call to enter the visible communion of the Catholic Church, that call will come to them plainly and unmistakably as a call of duty, and that when it does it must not be refused.

We can prepare the ground by our sympathetic understanding of and co-operation with our separated brethren, not only



for the making of individual converts, but for the growth and deeper penetration among them of Catholic ideas and Catholic truth, and in this way we encourage in them in a corporate capacity a desire for Christian unity. Sooner or later, by God's grace, they may realize that that unity can only be attained in and through the Catholic Church. Whether this realization will result only in the return of individuals or whether it will give rise to conversion by some sort of corporate movement we cannot tell; that rests with the power and mercy of Almighty God. Our duty is to work and to pray; and particularly to pray. To make every effort to extend the devotion of the Unity Octave, and not to rest till Catholics in England and the world over realize that the re-union of Christendom is the primary and most urgent need of our time.

HENRY ST. JOHN, O.P.

## MEDIEVAL WALL PAINTINGS IN SERBIA

**M**EDIEVAL Serbia was fundamentally a child of the Byzantine world. Her religion, her art, her court ceremonial, her administrative hierarchy, the divisions of her army, all trace their origin to Constantinople. Even the *Zadruga*, the custom of several generations living together in a single large home, may be traced to the Byzantine hearth-tax; and the Serbian Spring Festival—the *Rusalia*—is a memory of the Byzantine Feast of Roses—the *Rosalia*. Yet, by the strength of its native individuality and ability as well as through other cross-currents of influence from the West and the Near East, Serbia produced an art with its own characteristics of great power and beauty.

From the beginning of the Serbian kingdom in the twelfth century the link with Byzantine civilisation was strong. Stefan Nemanya (ruled c. 1171–1195), the founder of the dynasty of Serbian kings, had been a vassal of Manuel I Comnenus, but after the latter's death (1180) succeeded in making Serbia completely independent of East Rome politically; yet it was he who forged a most important link between Byzantium and the nascent civilization of Serbia when he retired to Mount Athos and, in 1196, founded the Serbian monastery of Chilandari there. The close intercourse with the monastic culture of the Empire that this monastery brought about was continually to influence both the art and literature of Serbia and to play a great formative part in Serbian religious life. Stefan's third son, to become known as St. Sava, became a monk of Mount Athos and had also travelled in the Holy Land, and he it was who returned to his country and organized its Church, bringing it definitively within the Byzantine ecclesiastical sphere. In consequence, although his brother *Stefan the First-Crowned*, received that crown from the papal legate in 1217, the direct ecclesiastical connection of Serbia with Rome was short-lived. Towards the end of the thirteenth century, *Stefan Uroš II (Milutin)* made Serbia the most powerful state in the Balkans. *Stefan Uroš III* conquered part of Bulgaria and began that move down into Byzantine territory in Macedonia which was to have such importance for Serbian culture. Between 1331–35 *Stefan Dušan* conquered the whole of Macedonia down to Salonica itself, that most Byzantine of cities, but also gave his country more ready access to the West by the Adriatic, for he conquered not only Thessaly, the Epirus and Arcarnania but

N.B.—All the illustrations to this article are taken, as stated below, from the Yugoslav Exhibition held at the Royal Academy in Jan. and Feb. this year, and are reproduced by kind permission. The blocks of the second and third have been kindly lent by the *Catholic Herald*.



also Albania. All these new territories shifted the centre of activity further South to the neighbourhood of Skolpje (Usküb) where he was crowned Czar of the Romaioi and Serbs in 1346. But the dynasty of Nemanya came to an end with the death of his son in 1371. The great battle of Kossovo (1389), round which so many famous epics were woven and in which the Serbs were heavily defeated by the Turks, also marks the end of an epoch in Serbian painting: the *Macedonian* school gives place to the so called *Cretan*.

Serbian painting, at least until the fall of the kingdom, belongs to the *Macedonian* school, perhaps more properly called "Neo-hellenistic"; the time of the *Despots* and later, saw the ascendancy of the so-called *Cretan* school, which probably had its origins in Venice. This last period is not considered here.

Serbia entered the stream of Byzantine culture at the end of the twelfth century, and, as O. M. Dalton<sup>1</sup> said, "By the beginning of the thirteenth century . . . was the home of a painting, the importance of which is only just beginning to be realised"; it exists "chiefly on the walls of numerous churches and to a minor degree in manuscripts." But already in the eleventh century Middle Byzantine art had taken root in Macedonia and had begun to develop that character, bold and broad, "expressionistic" in manner, fundamentally Byzantine yet differing from the "court" style at that time dominant in the religious art of the capital.

The uncovering and careful study of the twelfth to fourteenth century frescoes in the churches of Macedonia and Serbia during the last twenty years, principally by Okunev, have gone far to solving the problem of the origins of the so-called *Palaeologue Renaissance*, over which so much controversy has raged among Byzantinologists. They, together with some church frescoes in North Russia and in Bulgaria, provide a missing link: the art of the time of the Palaeologues no longer appears as a fresh start after a strange lacuna, requiring Occidental influences (leaving aside the Armenian influences for which Strzygowski as ever, pleads) to account for its new vigour, freshness, and grace. In the frescoes of Neresi, dated precisely by a Greek inscription to 1164, we already have all the characteristics so often noticed in the work of the following centuries: these paintings are strongly impressionistic; they have great daring in line and colour; they are full of emotion and pathos and a certain human tenderness and grace; they show a tendency to realism in the portrayal of the Gospel scenes, no longer sticking closely to the

<sup>1</sup> *East Christian Art*. O. M. Dalton, 1925. p. 237.

traditional iconography. On the other hand, they have much greater simplicity than the later work. The various "Occidental theories" proposed by Kondakov, modified by Aĭnilov, and followed in a degree by Dalton and Diehl, as to the origin of the characteristics of this later work become no longer necessary, for it is simply the growth and development of what went before. Yet how did this twelfth century art, so different from the formalism that had become the rule in Byzantine religious art, itself come to be? Italy can no longer be accounted the source, for it ante-dates the Sienese work of this type. Muratov<sup>1</sup> is probably right in arguing that it springs from the Hellenistic tradition that had never been lost by the Byzantines, but which lived on rather in the secular art, now so largely lost, than in the great hieratic religious mosaics and paintings. The two native streams of religious and Hellenistic art at last run together to form a new spring of life.

The great series of frescoes at Neresi is then of much importance in the development of Byzantine art. "It is at Neresi," says Okunev,<sup>2</sup> "that we find for the first time these essays in dramatizing the subject and in treating it realistically, proceedings for which the honour had hitherto been given to the painters of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries." These characteristics could be best seen by a reproduction of the *threnos*, the lamentation over the dead Christ, with its realist depiction of emotion in actions and facial expressions. Yet the fine head of St. John the Baptist here reproduced brings out excellently very many of the characteristics of this work: undoubtedly the old Byzantine iconographical type of the Precursor, yet it exaggerates all the traditional features, drawing them into a bold, swinging rhythm, with strange, telling colours and deep green shadows. The head is only a detail of a great decorative scheme, yet it can be seen how well suited is this art to large wall spaces. "Ces peintures étonnent par la hardiesse des procédés profondément picturaux, par la juxtaposition magistrale des couleurs, claires en général, par la finesse des modelés obtenus au moyen d'ombres transparentes et teintées. Okounev a pleinement raison de clore ainsi son étude: 'les fresques de Nerez présentent un monument du XIIe siècle d'une importance tout à fait exceptionnelle. Elles changent radicalement les opinions courantes sur la peinture byzantine de cette époque. Elles montrent, d'autre part, l'existence d'une évolution ininterrompue des formes au sein même de la peinture byzantine, depuis le XIIe siècle jusqu'au XIVe.'"<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Paul Muratoff. *La peinture Byzantine*. 1928. p. 127 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Muratoff, op. cit. p. 122.

<sup>3</sup> Muratoff, op. cit. p. 125.



By the time that Serbia received the Byzantine tradition the decorative schemes of churches had already been elaborately worked out to an almost uniform system consecrated by authority. This development took place after the period of the iconoclastic struggle, and "the principles applied are constant from the eleventh century and are those followed by the writers of the Painters' Guides. Nothing is admitted to a chief place that has no relation to the ritual."<sup>1</sup> From the central dome and the Bema, both representing the heavens and decorated respectively with the Christ Pantocrator, Archangels, Prophets, Apostles, and with the Theotikus *Orans* or with the divine Child, with the *Preparation of the Throne* for the Second Coming, with the priestly forerunners of Christ and the bishops of His Church; through the Evangelists on the pendentives of the dome, joining heaven and earth, the scenes from the Old Testament prefiguring the sacrifice of the New, the twelve feasts of the Church (New Testament scenes of Christ and His Mother); to the portraits of donors and princes, now relegated to the narthex, though once they intruded into the bema itself. This elaborate scheme made of the interior of the church a complete text-book of theology, not a mere series of pictured incidents or important but unrelated truths, but a highly methodical entity, a showing forth of the whole divine dispensation for man. There were some variations of this scheme here and there, due to local causes or to architectural differences, but Serbian artists followed it, on the whole, with great fidelity.

We may mention among the churches built in this first period by Stefan Nemanya and his immediate successors, besides Chilandari on Athos, Studeniča, Kursumlija, Sopočani.

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This Neo-Hellenistic art continued to develop in Serbia, to become richer and more complicated, and more startlingly impressionistic during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Indeed during the time of the Palaeologi Serbia was a more active centre than Constantinople itself, which, since the Latin inter-regnum, was impoverished and could no longer afford the rich mosaic decorations of an earlier age, with the single exception of the church of the Chora (Kahrieh Djami). But the Neo-Hellenistic art found as active centres at Mistra, the capital of the Morea, in Athos and in Serbia as it did in the City itself, and indeed this art goes by the general name of *Macedonian*. In Constantinople, tradition having been partly

<sup>1</sup> Dalton. Op. cit. p. 244.

lost, art tended to become somewhat eclectic and a certain confusion of styles in a single painting sometimes breaks the unity of the whole. Serbia grew in the style she had used from the first, assimilating the new elements and going from strength to strength. Her art at this period both of her greatest political and artistic power is strong and unified. The bold, free style is masterly, and often there is a grace of movement that is more than reminiscent of Sienese work; and Serbia had considerable contact with Italy, chiefly through Ragusa and Venice. This is the style that held sway during the great period of church building and decoration in Serbia, the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The many churches and monasteries built by Serbian kings, especially Milutin and Dušan, and Serbian nobles during the period of national greatness, are covered with many magnificent series of these paintings, some of them only uncovered in the last decade and perhaps already destroyed in the course of this war. The Yugo-Slav Exhibition, arranged by the Yugo-Slav Embassy and the British Council at Burlington House in January and February this year, contained a fine series of photographic and coloured reproductions of frescoes from the interior of many of the medieval Serbian churches, and all the accompanying illustrations are taken from this collection, by kind permission.

The Exhibition carried the story from the first establishment of Byzantine art in Macedonia, giving the eleventh century example of the church of St. Sophia, Ochrida, through Neresi (1164), Mileševo (c. 1236), Žiča (early thirteenth century), Sopočani (c. 1265), and all the wealth of churches of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, to the fifteenth century church of Kalenič.

At first the paintings in all these churches, whether within Serbian territory or not, remain essentially Greek, and indeed seem to be the work of Greek artists, for not only are the inscriptions commonly in Greek but even where these are in Slavonic the signatures are invariably in Greek. This, as Talbot Rice points out, in opposition to Petkovič's contention,<sup>1</sup> is a more convincing proof than the inscriptions themselves. To this class belong *Mileševo* (1236), *Morača* (same date), *Sopočani* (1250-65), the important paintings of *Nagoričino* (c. 1317), near Kumanovo, and *Gračanica* (c. 1320) near Školpje, and also the paintings of *Dečani* (church 1327, paintings few years later). We illustrate this work with another head of St. John the Baptist from the church at Gračanica. It can be seen how far impressionism has developed. This cadaverous,

<sup>1</sup> D. Talbot Rice, *Byzantine Art*. 1935. p. 106, n. 2.



mournful creature, painted almost entirely in shades of grey, has come very near to being a caricature of the traditional St. John. It has an admirable boldness and style, but the *impression* seems to be of the exterior, not of inner spiritual strength.

The paintings of the monastery at *Mileševo* continue in the spirit and style of Neresi, but those of the monastery of *Sopočani* are "plus étonnantes encore." "Là de nouveau, des compositions étendues telles que la Crucifixion ou la Dormition, grouillantes de figures, sont faites entièrement d'après la donnée du tableau, dont le but est le sens dramatique de l'événement. A la différence de la grande et noble simplicité de Nerez, l'artiste aspire à la richesse, à la complexité des groupes et des fonds architectoniques. Mais, par-dessus tout, il se livre à une adaptation des procédés impressionnistes dont la hardiesse atteint presque au paradoxe. Les fresques de Sopotchany contiennent une série de figures absolument inouïes sous ce rapport, telles, par exemple, l'image de ce saint militaire à la tête chenue et dont les cheveux sont peints de couleur bleu pur. Le maître qui peignit cette figure était évidemment sous l'empire de ce 'formalisme immanent' qui devint la base de la plus récente peinture française après Cézanne. Dans cette force et cette rapidité du modelé, que l'artiste réalise au moyen des ombres vertes du visage et des larges 'touches' blanches des vêtements, on sent l'effort d'une nouvelle école de peinture inspirée par les audaces qu'elle a découvertes dans la tradition de l'hellénisme, tradition ancienne mais encore loin d'être usée. Les fresques de Sopotchany sont faites par un maître dont l'histoire de l'art devra un jour savoir le nom."<sup>1</sup>

In the cathedral of *Nagoričino* the five domes and the walls are all decorated with paintings which Kondakov considers contemporary with the building, that is about 1317. They have been described by Millet (working on the "occidental theory") as "penetrated with the grace of Siena." Indeed Dalton<sup>2</sup> says that an influence can be detected in certain details "which may be that of Duccio himself," nor does the discovery of the continuity of tradition in the Macedonian school of painting necessarily preclude all possibility of influence in any detail: the Medieval artistic world was remarkably susceptible of interpenetration of influences. The paintings of Gračanica have been described by Kondakov as representing the best later Byzantine style, though Diehl's remark is that they are better preserved but with less charm.

By the reign of Milutin (1282-1321), however, a Slav element begins to appear in the frescoes of many churches and to the

<sup>1</sup> Muratoff, op. cit. pp. 124-5.

<sup>2</sup> Dalton, op. cit. p. 258.

artists responsible for this work and that which succeeded it Okunev has given the name of *Greco-Slav School*. In Serbia and Bulgaria native artists were now in possession of the Greek craftsmanship. Talbot Rice<sup>1</sup> summarised the characteristics of this school as being "pure bright colours, clean drawing, harmonious composition, and graceful and well-proportioned figures. The faces are well modelled, the modelling being achieved by opposition of light and shade, and not by the addition of white high-lights, a feature which is developed by the Cretan rather than by the Macedonian school and its branches." To this school belong the paintings in the royal chapel built by Milutin at *Studenica* (1314), the church of the Virgin at *Peć* (Ipek, c. 1310), the church of St. Nicetas at *Cučer* (early fourteenth century, restored 1483-4), and the church of St. Nicholas at *Luboten*, built in the reign of Stefan Dušan (1337). The striking painting of St. Nadelja here reproduced must serve to illustrate this work.

Talbot Rice ascribes the paintings of *Gradatz* (1314) which, like Gračanica and Studenica, was founded by Milutin, to the main Middle Byzantine tradition become somewhat wooden, to which he also gives *St. Clement in Ochrida* (1295) and *Žiča* in Macedonia (fourteenth century).

The same author distinguishes a "monastic" school within the Macedonian of which it is a branch, "but less accomplished and less refined. It is characterised by more sombre colouring, less virile drawing, and rather graceless figures. The aim is in the main didactic, and preference is shown for scenes of an obscure, apocryphal character. The most important monuments are *Lesnovo* (1349), *Markov Monastir* (late fourteenth century), and *Matejič* (late fourteenth century)."<sup>2</sup> We reproduce a section of the frescoes at Lesnovo, which scarcely seems to confirm this unflattering account, though it certainly has not the originality and vigour of the main stream of Macedonian work. The signs of the Zodiac surrounding the Pantokrator may be noted as a feature more usual in Roumania than in Serbia, but, since most Roumanian characteristics come by way of Serbia, it is interesting to find an example there. A St. Blasius from Markov Monastir, which was reproduced in the Yugo-Slav Exhibition is as wild as the wild beasts that he traditionally tamed, certainly original and vigorous, almost to the point of the grotesque, but it does lack delicacy. The characterisation of a clear-cut *Monastic School* seems scarcely borne out by the examples given.

Monastic influences on Serbian art come primarily from

<sup>1</sup> Rice, op. cit. p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> Rice, op. cit. p. 108.



Athos, especially through the Serbian monastery of Chilandari, which, as we have seen, Stefan Nemanya founded, and which Milutin restored; there was also a connection with Vatopedi (1193) and in 1364 Simopetra was restored by a Serbian king. The Serbian connection with the Holy Mount was always close, and Stzrygowski argued that Serbian art was influenced by Syro-Mesopotamian traditions which never passed through Constantinople but were transmitted directly from the East to Athos. Diehl will have none of this and maintains that there was nothing distinctive in Athonite art to make it more than an aspect of Byzantine. But, whether this monastic *something* was distinctive or a mere aspect, it influenced, as one would expect, the manuscript paintings of Serbia even more than her wall paintings.

The Macedonian school then is responsible for a series of magnificently decorated churches in Macedonia and Serbia, as well as in Greece, Bulgaria and Russia, that can rank with the finest art of any age and of which a remarkable amount has survived the centuries of war and pillage that those unhappy lands have undergone.<sup>1</sup>

E. J. B. FRY.

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<sup>1</sup> The chief monuments of the Cretan school are *Ravenica* (1381), *Ljubostinja* (1389-1405), *Manassia* (1407), *Kalenic* (1405-10), *Rudenica*, the second church at *Pavlica*. They lie for the most part in the North.

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## NEWS AND COMMENTS

Our first duty is to offer the new Archbishop of Westminster, Mgr. Bernard Griffin, both our congratulations on and our prayers for the arduous work that lies before him as the result of his elevation. The Archbishop has graciously sent his special blessing to the Editor and the work of the *E.C.Q.* We are deeply grateful.

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In spite of what we said in the last issue, we are still going to hold over any detailed commentary on the News till another issue of this present year. We hope to get this first number of 1944 out during March and so to commence the revived quarterly issue to time, so we will confine the present items of news to a few short notices of happenings that took place for the most part during last year.

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ROME.

The edition of the Slav-Byzantine *eukhologion* (missal) prepared under the direction of the Sacred Eastern Congregation in Rome has now been published. There are, in fact, two editions : one is in accordance with typical Russian usage, the other follows the usages of the Catholic Ruthenians (Ukrainians). The Russian edition differs in no ways from the Orthodox text, except for the addition of the commemoration of the Pope as Supreme Hierarch, and the omission from the proper of certain post-separation Orthodox saints. It is hoped in Rome that this printing will also be of use in those Orthodox churches that have lately been unable to republish their books for themselves. The volume of liturgical epistles and gospels is now in the press.

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Among the Byzantine priests ordained at the Russian College in Rome this year were three members of the Czechoslovak province of the Society of Jesus, Fathers Vanecka, Krajcar and Zybak. They concelebrated their first Liturgy in the basilica of St. Mary Major on Easter Monday. Father Raita was also recently ordained for the Rumanian province. The three Czechoslovaks were all former pupils of the Institute of SS. Cyril and Methodius at Velehrad, where Jesuit candidates for the priesthood of both rites are trained. It has already produced two other Byzantine priests.

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The Superior General of the Basilian monks of St. Josaphat, Father Dionysius Tkaczuk, died in Rome in February, 1944. He was sixty-six years old. R.I.P.

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#### EGYPT.

On Sunday, June 6th, 1943, Mgr. Kamel Medawar was consecrated archbishop auxiliary of the Patriarchate. The ceremony was presided over by His Beatitude, Patriarch Cyril IX Moghabghab, at the Melkite Catholic cathedral at Cairo. Among those present were the representative of the Holy See, Father Arthur Hughes, envoy of the Apostolic Delegate; Mgr. Spellman, Archbishop of New York, delegate of President Roosevelt to the Vatican; and representatives, both ecclesiastical and lay, of all communities. A sermon on "Union of the Faith, the true basis of Peace" was delivered by the delegate of the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church.

Among the most outstanding discourses was a panegyric in verse on the new Archbishop, delivered by Khalil bey Moutran, and a speech by Lieutenant Zoghby (member of the Orthodox Church and a British subject) acclaiming the occasion as a meeting of East and West in unity of the Faith. (*La Bourse Egyptienne*, June 7th, 1943.)

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Mgr. Spellman was also received at the Catholic Coptic patriarchate by the administrator of the see, Amba Mark Khuzam, Bishop of Thebes. In the course of his address Amba Mark referred to the fact that the Catholic Copts have multiplied five times in sixty years, and now number 50,000, with eight priests who lead most precarious and devoted lives.

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On the death of the dissident Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria, Anba Makarius, Archbishop of Assiut was elected as his successor on February 4th, 1944.

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The annual service of the Fellowship of Unity was held at the Orthodox cathedral of St. Nicolas at Cairo, on Thursday, December 9th, 1943. His Beatitude Patriarch Mgr. Christophorus II delivered an oration in Greek. The service was attended by representatives of Church and State, including Coptic and Armenian Orthodox religious, Anglican and Protestant clergy, and many eminent laymen (*La Bourse Egyptienne*, December 13th, 1943).

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## PALESTINE.

His Beatitude Patriarch Cyril IX presided at the consecration of Father George Hakim as Archbishop of St. Jean d'Acre and of all Galilee. The ceremony took place on June 13th, 1943, at the Melkite cathedral of Faggallah, and was attended by a large gathering of prominent people representing Church and State, among whom were Father Anderson, representing the Apostolic Delegate; Father Margot, Rector of the College of the Jesuit Fathers; and representatives of the various Eastern rites.

Mgr. George Hakim, in addition to his work as Director of the Patriarchal College, devoted many years of successful labour to the education of children of the Melkite community. He also founded *Liens*, a review devoted to religious, literary and scientific interests, intended to act as a connecting link between the various members of the Melkite flock (*Le Journal d'Egypte*, June 14th, 1943).

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## U.S.A.

It would appear from the *Czechoslovak Catholic Bulletin* for August 1943, that Dom Prokop Neuzil has retired from the abbacy of St. Procopius' monastery, Lisle, Illinois, and has been succeeded by Dom Oldrich Zlamal. The aged Abbot Neuzil is an indefatigable worker in the cause of reunion with the East, and has been responsible for making the Benedictine monastery at Lisle the centre it is of Eastern-rite activity.

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## E.C.Q. AGENT IN THE U.S.A.

By kind permission of the Abbot of St. Meinrad's Abbey Dom Polycarp Sherwood has undertaken to try to supply this need. So will U.S.A. subscribers and those interested in the *E.C.Q.* please communicate with Dom Polycarp Sherwood at St. Meinrad's Abbey, St. Meinrad, Indiana.

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### THE AKATHISTOS HYMN AND THE ROSARY.

DEAR SIR,

In his excellent letter from the Middle East in the last issue, Mr. Aldridge says that he supposes the Akathistos Office in honour of our Lady corresponds to the Latin office *de S. Maria in Sabbato*. In so far as they are both *devotions* to our Lady that have been incorporated into the public prayer of the Church, this is true, but it is more true to compare the Akathistos with the Rosary as an eminent liturgist has shown. I will quote from Cardinal Schuster: "To-day's feast of thanksgiving, by its connection with a special form of prayer to the Blessed Virgin, that of the Rosary, recalls the feast kept by the Greeks on the Saturday before Passion Sunday when the 'Hymnos Akathistos' is sung. This festival was instituted in memory of the many occasions on which Constantinople was delivered from barbarian invaders through the intercession of Mary. In both cases the patronage of the Blessed Virgin and a Christian victory are connected with a special form of prayer to the Mother of God.

"If we consider the 'Hymnos Akathistos' more attentively, we find other points of resemblance with the Rosary, for in the Byzantine hymn, divided as it is into four parts, the mysteries of the infancy of Christ are commemorated, i.e. the Angelic Salutation, the Visitation, St. Joseph's doubts, the Adoration of the Shepherds and the Magi, the Flight into Egypt, the Prophecy of Simeon, precisely as in the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary" (*The Sacramentary*, Vol. V, p. 166).

It would be well if this were considered when there is the temptation to introduce the Western Rosary among Catholics of the Byzantine rite, either by their own native clergy or those Western priests who have adopted the rite; they already have what they need in this beautiful hymn.

Yours, etc.,

K.F.E.W.

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

*Church-Life and Church-Order* during the first four centuries.

The Birbeck Lectures delivered at Trinity College, Cambridge in 1924 by the late James Vernon Bartlet, M.A., Oxon.; Hon. D.D., St. Andrews. Edited by Cecil John Cadoux with a foreword by Dr. W. B. Selbie, and a Memoir by the Editors. (Basil Blackwell; Oxford 1943). pp. vi—lix and 1—206.

The problem to be solved and the methods employed in the solution are set forth in the introduction to the Lectures. The Lecturer sets out to study the mutual relationship of Life and Order considered both in themselves and in as far as different times and places have shifted the emphasis from one to the other. With a view to clearing the ground, the lecturer proceeds to define his terms of Life and Order, and in doing so, distinguishes the terms as either intending Facts or Ideas. Life and Order are the inner and outer aspects of Corporate Christian experience or if you will, the invisible soul and the sense expression of this soul. Both therefore in this mode of acceptance denote facts. The terms however are capable of use in so far as they express Ideas regarding the actual facts of both the inner and the outer aspects of corporate Christian experience. These ideas spring from the facts and in turn re-act on their development as the mind strives after what the lecturer calls the fittest conceptual expression of its experience with a view either to a clearer apprehension or a more effective imparting of this experience to others. Such conceptual expression however, is always relative and never more than approximately adequate in as far as the symbols used to express such ideas must necessarily be imperfect; an approximation to the idea and merely approximately adequate for future generations. Not only so, but the difficulty also arises as to whether actual order is at different stages true to type; whether one aspect of this inner experience as expressed in order does not demand the sacrifice of other aspects originally latent, and by so doing impairs their well-being then, and in the future.

We must always bear in mind that primitive Church-Life and -Usage are to be viewed in their own proper atmosphere of the "Spirit" which is the primary factor in connection with the Messianic Body of the "Saints." The method of inquiry must never be retrogressive. Even Pauline and Johannine conceptions have obscured the issue, and by the

fourth century, the "Spirit" is at a discount, the atmosphere redolent with "Order." Thus close adherence must be made to genetic order of thought and representation. The relative emphasis of Life and Order must be marked, and its changes studied in development. Thus ultimately we come to Church-Life as "pietas," i.e., the dutiful attitude to God and fellow-members of the Church. Order is the form of organising corporate Christian "pietas," as from time to time regarded as that best suited to the vital expression of this "pietas." To these two corporate expressions of the Spirit, we may apply the adjective Church—i.e., corporate, since such was the primitive meaning when distinguished from the developments and shades of meaning attached to "Church-Idea" in the development of Christianity.

Such is the thesis in general, to be worked out in the study of the various Orders that have come down to us from the Didache to those of the late fourth century.

It is impossible to attempt here a critique of the individual portions of the book dealing with these orders. Nobody will call into question the erudition of the author: his expert knowledge of the texts. The method however of interpretation consists in a retrogressive movement, that is, each succeeding text is in reality measured by the standard of its predecessor. The additions are conceptual expressions of a more primitive "spirit": a changing of emphasis with subsequent enslavement of the "spirit," until finally the peculiar marks of primitiveness of the Didache for example, are difficult to reconcile with our ideas which are based on the ascendancy of Pauline and Johannine teaching. We must then, in order to regain the liberty of the "spirit," look back to Pentecost. Here, the experience of Divine Inspiration as a source and essence of Christianity was a new kind of fellowship. It was not primarily the "Church" as an institution or constituted order of corporate life. The Apostolic function was simply that of authoritative witness, not of governmental commission. Any thought to the contrary is simply an anachronism. Apostolic Succession is obviously out of keeping with the thought of the Apostolic Age. The conclusion can only be that such succession and institutional government are conceptual expressions which arose later in the development of Christianity.

Such is very briefly the treatment of the thesis. As such, coupled with the form of expression, it is difficult to analyse. With much of what is said we can be in agreement, but only as a partial expression of the whole. It is the perennial difficulty of what one might call the "airiness" of the language



It seems impossible to take any part of a thesis and analyse it. There is a wealth of expression; almost a spate of words. There is the vague use of terms and phrases so often associated with Protestant Theology. Possibly the difficulty underlying is that of *Petitio Principii*: of the purely subjective standpoint, all the more devastating when the exponent pleads objective treatment of facts. There is always the assumption that Christ could never have founded an organisation such as the Church. The concept of the Church as an aggregate is always envisaged—it never is in itself an entity, a moral being. All organisation as such is a binding of the “spirit.” This latter is, and must be free, but it is a confusing of the free and the licensed. Order cannot apparently consist with freedom or liberty, it is a binding of the “spirit.” This is but a step to individual conceptual expressions of personal inspiration, to freedom of thought and the anarchy that all this implies. The Charismatic is more primitive than the teacher, or one appointed to the Ministry. What sanction can restrain the Charismatic or even say corporate-individuals as the gentiles of Antioch, Syria and Silicia. Yet Peter and the Apostles do not hesitate to send by the hand of Barnabas and Paul what can only be called an authoritative document; one obviously based on consciousness of real mission and authority; one invoking the authority of the Holy Ghost himself by those who clearly consider themselves capable of so doing. Nobody will deny that Antioch had more than its share of Charismatics, of individual “inspirations.” Why then should such a document be needed. There is no hint at resentment on the part of the Christians of Antioch—they receive the word for consolation.

However, it is to the *Didache* that our author looks as his real witness. This he considers as the most primitive of conceptual expression. It would be difficult to see how such a claim could be made for the primitiveness of the Acts of the Apostles since St. Paul is ruled out of court as introducing new features into the corporate conceptual expression, although apart from St. Matthew it is difficult to find more primitive Christian writings than the Epistles. Thus the *Didache* is selected as the most approaching to the primitive. As will be seen, our author takes his stand upon the earlier date of this document. Not only so but he visualizes an even earlier recension more primitive than the present form. Such a structure built on the *Didache* is however without sure foundation. However interesting such a document may be, it is useless as a witness for any particular date. No two editors or critics agree either as to its date or its provenance.

Opinions range from the middle of the first century to the late second. It is considered to come from places as far apart as Palestine or Syria and Egypt. Let us admit once and for all that we know absolutely nothing either of its author or the place of its origin. For the rest one may have one's own ideas, but they are merely theories. What in effect can the criteria of internal criticism be which makes a critic distinguish, for no apparent reason, two recensions or rather a mingling of two recensions while he quite off-handedly rejects another sentence of a chapter as being post-Clementine, merely because it does not fit his particular thesis. Such use of so dubious a document invalidates every argument.

Clement of Rome on the other hand comes in for summary dismissal as introducing a new motive of authority—an idea, we are told, which he naturally imbibed from the Roman Psychology of Order. There is no contemporary evidence that anybody rebuked him for such an innovation. To suggest that it was an innovation is a purely gratuitous assertion on the part of our Author.

In this way, using the *Didache* as a measure of succeeding documents, it is easy to point out the growth of new conceptual expressions in the remaining Church Orders. The history of the binding of the "spirit" can be worked out until we reach the conclusion that only the personal inspiration is the safe rule and indeed was the norm in the primitive Church. Such a denial of authority and the substitution of personal inspiration cannot but lead to anarchy. Nor will corporate "spirit"-experience serve its turn, or otherwise how explain the inconsistency of the inspiration of the Church of Corinth with the inspiration of Paul, which is in reality that of the Church of Jerusalem, since we are assured that Paul had consulted with the "Pillars" and had been approved by them. Ultimately the danger of "misuse of written forms of order in a religion of the 'Spirit,'" must be applied to the Gospels themselves. Logically one can only rely on the personal inspiration; one must ultimately mistrust all conceptual expression of spirit-experience of others, either as individuals or as corporate-bodies. Christianity can then only be a personal experience; it can only be understood in the light of individual spirit experience. But if one and the same Spirit "worketh," how is it possible that all are divided? Where can unity exist save in a living organism established by Christ Himself; an organism directed by His Spirit; independent of individuals for its existence; the Kingdom whose existence is co-terminous with that of the Incarnation.

DOM ANSELM THATCHER,

*The Way of a Pilgrim* (1941), and *The Pilgrim continues His Way* (1943), both translated by R. M. French; also both books are published under one cover. (S.P.C.K.) 3s. 6d. each and 6s. bound together.

The former of these two books was first published in 1930 and it was soon after this that the continuation of the narrative came into the hands of the Rev. R. M. French, and this, after some hesitation concerning the value of sequels, second parts and the like, he translated and gave to the public last year. There are also the two books combined under one cover with the addition of illustrations of some Russian eikons. Thus, at least, shows an interest on the part of the public in this treatise on prayer, for though the books are shot through with the charm of vivid pictures of Russian life during the nineteenth century, this is what in fact they are.

The centre of this prayer-method is the invocation "Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, have mercy upon me a sinner." This is first a vocal prayer; an effort is made to have constantly on the lips and in spirit this prayer of Jesus. The second stage is when the mind enters into the prayer and concentrates on the name of Jesus. The third and last stage is when the prayer is said as of itself in the heart, constantly and without effort. "The true narrative of a pilgrim addressed to his Father in God," which is the meaning of the Russian title of this book, treats of each stage in intimate detail, the pilgrim illustrating his point by many an anecdote. The fact that the translator admits that in the first instance it was the literary charm of the narrative that attracted him, speaks of itself for the appeal of the book. So it is in every way worth reading.

We would now stress the importance of this book as the best possible introduction to Orthodox spirituality. Many a Westerner's impression of the prayer of Jesus is that it is some Orthodox devotion or other and, after the manner of our devotions, mainly an external and private prayer, whereas, to quote a modern Russian writer, it lies at the very heart of Orthodox mysticism. It is the invocation of the *name of God*, of the name of Jesus that gives the efficacy and power to the prayer. And this could lead to a theological discussion as to the meaning of the veneration of the name of God and on its active power. Viewed thus, the prayer of Jesus brings to the fore the teaching of the Hesychasts in a simple practical way. But we would need an article to treat of this subject.

It should also be remembered that this prayer is not confined to Russians, nor to monks; it is certainly much practised by the Russian laity. Historically it can be traced back to the monks of Egypt in the fourth century. Revived by Symeon,



the New Theologian, tenth century. Then in the fourteenth century to Gregory Palamas (see *E.C.Q.*, Vol. III, articles by Basil Krivoshein). Then to the Russian and Rumanian Monasteries in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and specially Seraphim of Sarov (†1833).

This we hope will urge many to get, read and ponder on the *Narrative*, so that they may be able to practise in some way the prayer of Jesus. So perhaps it will be as well to add what Father I. Hausherr, S.J., has to say of this prayer-method :—

‘Side by side with the Hesychasm of the philosopher there was the Hesychasm of the simple people, and this latter, provided it remains faithful to the traditional principles of faith and asceticism, can indeed lead souls by means of abnegation and the ‘prayer of Jesus’ to a genuine contemplation and to a higher Christian perfection.”

DOM BEDE WINSLOW.

*The Church of the Eastern Christians.* By Nicolas Zernov. (S.P.C.K.) pp. 114. (1st Edition). 4s.

At first sight one might mistake this book for one of many similar books on the Orthodox Church for Western readers, and wonder why they have need of another. But it is certainly not Dr. Zernov's object in giving us this study simply to add to the number of already existing books on the subject. The author claims that the time in which we live makes the urge for Christian Unity very much more a necessity than ever before, and hence a different type of book is required. He says that since there is a new readiness to study each other's position, “this requires a new type of book which would describe one denomination to another, neither controversially nor merely scholarly; literature written without any desire either to allot the blame for, or to ignore the evil of divisions. We need books which presuppose the desire for unity and are based on the realization that both intellectual and moral effort are indispensable, if we are ever to reach this ultimate goal.”

We welcome this type of book from Dr. Zernov, but we suggest that he has already written books that come under this heading, e.g., *Moscow, the Third Rome* and *St. Sergius*. It is also true that we have other books of this type, Nicholas Arseniev's *We Beheld His Glory* and *Holy Moscow*, and Donald Attwater's *The Dissident Eastern Churches* and *Catholic Eastern Churches*, and there are doubtless others.

Roughly speaking, the book can be divided into three parts;

the Schism, what the Eastern Church and its teaching are, and the prospect of Unity. The first is treated, we think, in a too simple way, especially in regard to the early heresies. Surely Monophysitism and Nestorianism were heresies and not only schism, although in both cases nationalism played a dominant part! There is a general tendency throughout the book to minimize doctrine.

In the chapter entitled "The Eastern Church" we are pleased to see that the Uniates are mentioned, but the author does not seem to realize that they number some eight million. In this connection there is a great need for a handy book admitting frankly the historical and other reasons why some of the Uniates are a difficulty in the way of Union with the Orthodox while at the same time giving a complete picture of their real importance. Mr. Attwater's book, *Catholic Eastern Churches*, is most excellent and necessary but we need something more on the lines of a compact thesis.

The second part of the book dealing with Orthodox worship and teaching is very good and should help Christians of other traditions to understand the Orthodox mentality. The third part is also good but here, and in the book as a whole, the main concern seems to be only the Anglican and the Orthodox Churches. But, this apart, we recommend this book as of real value; specially are chapters six, seven, and eight of great interest.

We would, before we end, give two words of criticism. First, why always quote Alexis Khomiakov as the great Orthodox theologian on Church authority and never quote the early Church Fathers on whom he should base his teaching if he is really declaring Orthodox truth and not something new?

And lastly we would say that although there are reasons historical and practical why it is important to consider the coming together of the Anglican and Orthodox Churches yet the real problem of the reunion of East and West must be a study of the subject as it concerns the Eastern Churches and the Roman Church. We think that very likely England or the English speaking peoples are a good setting in which such a study should be made: it would thus be made away from the many national rivalries that make it so difficult in many parts of Europe and the Middle East for Catholics and Orthodox to come together, although this position is changing for the better in many countries. There is no doubt in our mind but that there is a great part to be taken by English Catholics in preparing the ground for the reunion of the Orthodox East and the Catholic West.

The book before us would have had far greater value if



it had been planned on broader lines and really visualized the union of East and West. It is important to keep things in right proportion.

DOM BEDE WINSLOW.

*The Rumanian Church.* By Marcu Beza. (S.P.C.K.) 1943. 9 plates. 3s. 6d.

The photographs of Rumanian ecclesiastical works of art are delightful, but the rest of the book seems to serve no very clear purpose. It is a pity, because such a series as this of small, popular books, on the life of the different autocephalous Churches of the East, could have so obvious a value.

There seems a complete lack of critical coherence or historical sequence. Without previous knowledge of Rumanian history it would be impossible to fit this assembly of generalizations and details of manuscripts, foundation charters, works of art and popular ballads into any coherent picture whatsoever. It would seem impossible to write any history, however summary, of a Balkan country without distinguishing the periods before, during and after the Turkish invasions; yet this is achieved. Indeed the fact of Turkish rule only begins to appear almost accidentally towards the end of the book. No idea whatsoever is given of Rumanian religious life, except the statement that the Iron Guard had a strong mystical Orthodox element in its origins, later perverted under persecution.

Lists of gifts of Voevods of Wallachia and Moldavia to churches and monasteries form the chief matter of the book, and an extremely confused account of various reunions with Rome flits through the pages, with such conclusions as the following: "Does one believe that the aforesaid Voevods embraced Catholicism of their own will, and not under pressure of necessity? Let one recollect the passage in the Bible: 'And it came to pass as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam . . . and he took to his wife Jezebel . . . and went and served Baal and worshipped him. And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal . . . ' Shades of the scarlet woman."

On page 12 we read that Hungary was in the thirteenth century "ruled by the Angevin Charles Robert, a real and proud representative of the Feudal system, which seems to us nowadays rather odd. It meant that someone had the innate right to reign, to get possession of another country's territories, with no regard to its people at all." As a descrip-



tion of feudalism the historian may be forgiven for finding this also "rather odd." The S.P.C.K. usually sponsors a higher standard of scholarship than this.

E. J. B. FRY.

*Greece and Britain.* By Stanley Casson. (Collins). 1943. 11 coloured and 64 other illustrations. 15s.

This is a brilliant little essay or series of essays on the relations between this country and Greece from the first Greek trading intercourse in nearly 2000 B.C. to the present day. The author tells of the Greek sea-captain from Marseilles who sailed to Cornwall before 525 B.C.; of Pytheas of Marseilles who circum-navigated "Albion" before the Britons had set foot in these islands, between 320 and 300 B.C.; of Julius Caesar's comment that he found the Greek alphabet in use in Britain; of the silver bowls of Byzantine workmanship found, just before this war, in the ship-burial at Sutton Hoo and apparently brought over by the Anglo-Saxons among their original possessions in their invasion of Britain; of Byzantine influence on the Anglo-Saxon Church and learning and the extraordinarily strong Byzantine influence on Anglo-Saxon art down to the eve of the Norman conquest (this most interesting chapter is, like the rest of the book, profusely illustrated); of Richard Coeur de Lion in Cyprus; of Nicander of Corfu's travels in the England of Henry VIII, with his comments on English fog, religion and the part women played in commerce, and his comments, too, on the Irish "who reject political institutions and other importations"; of the strange travels of an English organ and its maker to the new Sultan at Constantinople in the reign of Elizabeth and the adventures of this John Dallam by the way, his blundering into an Easter day liturgy and meal of scarlet Easter eggs in a hill-top village in Zante, his rescue from bandits on the overland return journey through Greece by the dragoman who revealed himself as "Mr. Finch of Chorley in Lancashire." The author then sketches in the revival of interest in Classical Greece, the British Protectorate of the Ionian islands, the part played by Byron, Coddington and English help and sympathies in general in the Greek war of liberation, the restoration of the Ionian islands to Greece and our alliance with Greece in the last war and this.

The profuse and excellent illustrations are worthy of note: the frontispiece is a lovely coloured reproduction of a Cretan

Baptism of Our Lord of the mid fifteenth century. The book is worthy of an index and bibliography.

E. J. B. FRY.

#### BOOKS RECEIVED.

Hollis & Carter, Ltd. *The Balance of Truth.* E. I. Watkin.

Cambridge University Press. *Hieronimo Giustiniani's History of Chios.* P. P. Argenti.

S.C.M. Press. *People, Church and State in Modern Russia.* P. B. Anderson.

U.S.A. *Prayer Book for Greek Catholic Rusins of America* Julius Grigassy.

C.T.S. *The Mystical Body of Jesus Christ.* Encyclical of Pope Pius XVI.